

June 28, 2010

Response from Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay to County Executive Levy:

The latest missive out of County Executive Levy's over-active press machine makes it clear that Mr. Levy still refuses to accept his personal responsibility for the failure of his early retirement proposal to gain the approval of the County Legislature last week. Instead, as usual, Mr. Levy blames everyone else for the problems he himself bears complete responsibility for creating.

Mr. Levy's press machine applies the spin. Let me explain the facts of what happened.

Mr. Levy has no one to blame but himself for the fact that the early retirement plan was not adopted. It was made amply clear to him the previous week that the Legislature was not going to approve the retirement plan unless it included the employees of the John J. Foley Skilled Nursing Facility. At Tuesday night's meeting that fact was again made clear to Mr. Levy. Republican County Legislator Lynne Nowick told the County Executive's representatives straight out that the bill he proposed was not going to pass and urged them to file a bill including Foley employees right then and there, telling them that such a bill would be adopted.

But Mr. Levy, in his usual schoolyard bully style, refused to compromise. And he lost. If he had the simple political skill of an adult to compromise, his early retirement plan would have been adopted.

Finally, the early retirement plan is nothing more than another Levy one-shot revenue scheme that will end up costing taxpayers more in the end. Like all his other one-shot revenue tricks, it makes him look good in the short term and hurts taxpayers in the end. Taxpayers, don't let Mr. Levy hoodwink you again.

Mr. Levy continues to try everything he can to push the sale of the Foley facility, with the threat of a lawsuit the latest move announced in his most recent press release. He previously tried blackmail, saying that he would include the Foley employees in the retirement plan if the Legislature would immediately schedule hearings on the sale of the nursing facility.

The Legislature will not respond to blackmail and threats and the Legislature will not move forward with the Foley sale until we do our due diligence in examining the real fiscal impact of the sale.

Mr. Levy also announces in his most recent press release that I am trying to block further civilianization of non-public safety positions in the police department that are currently being performed by sworn officers. That is simply untrue. The only thing that I have proposed is that light-duty officers be fully utilized to fill any open positions. My proposal would have absolutely no effect on any civilianization efforts and Mr. Levy knows that.

Mr. Levy also attacks the use of Procedural Motions to fund member item grants. I assume Mr. Levy is referring to the appropriations approved last week for some 25 non-profit organizations, with the majority receiving \$1,000 each. The groups funded included the Babylon Breast Cancer Coalition, the Community Family Literacy Project, Inc., Friends of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Interfaith Nutrition Network, Long Island Cares, the Suffolk County Veterans Halfway House Project, the Victims Information Bureau, the Boy Scouts, and various churches.

Which appropriation specifically does Mr. Levy disapprove of? The Breast Cancer Coalition? Help for abused women by the Victims Information Bureau? The Boy Scouts?

It's time for Mr. Levy to turn off the press machine and work cooperatively and intelligently with the Legislature to create a plan to bridge our budget crisis. We in the County Legislature are more than willing to do just that. Threats, blackmail and the non-stop press barrage from Mr. Levy will not get that done.